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NEW FOUNDATIONS FOR ONTARIO EDUCATION

Government
Publications

The provincial government is reforming the school system in Ontario. This is the first major overhaul of education in more than 25 years.

These changes will affect everyone in Ontario, whether they have school-age children or not.



Excellence in Ontario education



Ontario deserves the finest education system in the world – a system dedicated to excellence and accountable to the public that it serves.

The world around us has changed a lot in the last quarter century. Our education system has to reflect these changes if it hopes to keep pace with the needs of students, parents, and the rest of the community. The province's agenda for educational change is called *New Foundations for Ontario Education*.

New Foundations is based on the recent report of the Royal Commission on Learning. The commission heard the views of thousands of Ontarians and, on the basis of these views, developed a vision for a new kind of education system. That vision is guiding the action now being taken by the Government of Ontario.

We have a strong base on which to build a better education system. Over the years, Ontario's elementary and secondary schools have accomplished a great deal. We intend to build on these strengths to achieve our goals of excellence and accountability.

But there are parts of the school system that have become outdated, ineffective, or simply unfair. We have to fix these problems to make sure we get the highest quality of education for all students in Ontario.

Every dollar, every activity in the education system should be evaluated in light of a single question: "Does it help students learn?" I believe that *New Foundations for Ontario Education* meets that test. And, I believe, it meets the test without raising education taxes or increasing spending.

I hope you will read this brochure about the government's new approach to learning and teaching in elementary and high schools. Our planned initiatives and legislation are designed to create the finest education system in the world.

Dave Cooke
Minister of Education and Training





Here are Ontario's commitments to education:

- ✓ A focus on students
- ✓ Dedication to excellence
- ✓ An education system that's accountable to the public it serves

Let's be clear about what we expect students to learn

A school system that is dedicated to excellence and responsive to the public sets clear, consistent, and high expectations for all its students. It draws on the resources of the whole community. And it also lets everyone – students, parents, employers, and others – know what those expectations are.

Here's the government's plan:

- ✓ The Ministry of Education and Training will develop a province-wide curriculum. To begin immediately.
- This curriculum will cover everything students study from Junior Kindergarten through Grade 12.





- It will spell out clearly what all students are expected to learn wherever they live in the province.

✓ Provincial standards will measure how well students are learning.

- Standards will be developed for science and technology, the arts, and personal and social studies, which include areas such as geography, history, physical education, and health. (Standards for mathematics and language have already been developed.)

✓ A new, standard report card will be designed, for use across the province.

- The report card will provide parents with clear, consistent, and understandable information on how their children are doing at school.
- It will be ready for use in the 1996-97 school year.



Test, teach and learn, test again...

A good school system is responsible to the public and should be able to show that it's getting results in terms of student learning. Regular testing and other forms of assessment show how well students are learning and whether they are meeting provincial standards. Test results help students improve their performance, and let parents know how their children are doing at school. Testing also helps us improve the education system.

Here's the government's plan:

- ✓ All students will be tested in reading, writing, and mathematics in Grades 3, 6, 9, and 11.
- ✓ An independent agency, called the Education Quality and Accountability Office, has been set up to supervise testing in the province.
 - This agency will:
 - maintain public confidence by making sure appropriate tests are carried out properly;
 - communicate the results of testing to the public;
 - monitor the school system to see how well it is working and let the public know;
 - co-ordinate Ontario's participation in national and international testing;
 - conduct reviews of programs and services in schools and school boards;
 - recommend ways to improve the system.



Excellence in teaching is the key to student success

Here's the government's plan:

- ✓ Extend teacher training from one year to two years and put more emphasis on practical classroom experience. To begin in September 1997.
- ✓ Establish an independent body, called the Ontario College of Teachers, to set the professional standards teachers must meet not only before entering the classroom but throughout their careers. To begin in January 1996.
 - The college will also respond to complaints from the public.
- ✓ Require teachers to renew their certification every five years through professional development.

The Royal Commission on Learning said: "Teachers are our heroes. We believe they should be everyone's heroes."

There is no substitute for good teaching. Dedicated, knowledgeable, motivated teachers are the key to exciting schools and to a responsive education system in Ontario. To make sure that Ontario students have the best education possible, we must give new teachers better training, and help teachers who are already in the classroom keep their skills up to date.



Parents, students, and the community shape our schools



Schools should be the centre of people's neighbourhoods. Parents, students, business people, union members, members of community support groups, and many others care deeply about their local school. They should have more say in the way it is run.

Here's the government's plan:

- ✓ All schools must have a school council in place by the end of the 1995-96 school year.
- The make-up of school councils will vary from community to community. However, every council must have as members:
 - parents (a majority), including a parent as the chair
 - a community representative
 - a student (for high schools)
 - the principal
 - a teacher
 - another staff member



- School councils will advise the principal and the school board on issues such as:
 - curriculum
 - the school's budget priorities
 - selection of a new school principal
 - the school's code of behaviour
 - ways of preventing violence and racism in the school
 - ways of keeping parents, students, and others informed of school matters
 - the school-year calendar
 - extracurricular activities
 - ways of keeping close ties with local social, health, and recreation groups
- ✓ Parents will be represented on the new Ontario College of Teachers, which will set standards for the teaching profession.
- ✓ After consultation, a statement of the rights and responsibilities of parents and students will be prepared and distributed province-wide. To be ready for September 1995.

Let's give young children a head start

Young children have a boundless ability to learn. Long before starting Grade 1, they are developing the skills that will prepare them for school. Experience in other countries has proved that the earlier a child's learning can be stimulated, the better his or her chances for success at school will be. The earlier education can begin, the fewer problems there will be later on.

New Foundations will give parents greater

choice of preschool programs for their children.

In the early grades, more attention must be paid to teaching young children how to speak, read, and write well. Learning problems should be identified early and addressed. Steps are also being taken to make sure all children have fundamental reading and writing skills by the time they finish Grade 3. These measures will give them a stronger start in school.

Here's the government's plan:

- ✓ A new full-day Early Childhood Education Program will be introduced for children aged four and five.
 - It will be offered at a few selected locations in September 1995.
 - It will become available across the province beginning in 2000.
 - Parents will decide whether they want their children to attend all or part of the program.
 - It will be funded through savings in other areas of the education system.
- ✓ All school boards must have programs that provide early and intensive help to students with reading problems.
- ✓ An Early Literacy Fund will be established, with initial funding of \$10 million over the next two years. This money will be used to ensure that all children develop reading and writing skills.
 - Schools must have programs to identify and help children with reading problems. The fund will help schools start these programs.
 - The fund will provide money to strengthen teachers' skills in teaching reading and writing.

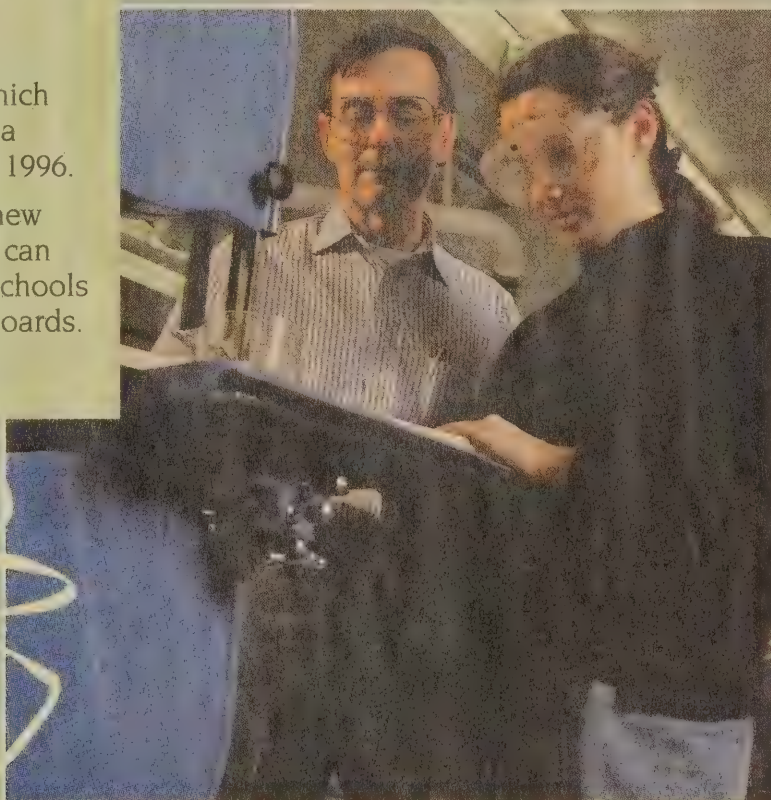


Students need a more relevant high school program

Here's the government's plan:

- ✓ Change the high school program so that students can graduate in four years instead of five years.
- ✓ Write a province-wide curriculum for high school, in English and French.
 - The curriculum will spell out what a student is supposed to know and be able to do by the time she or he graduates. To be ready by 1996.
 - It will also include standards, which are ways of measuring how well a student is doing. To be ready by 1996.
- ✓ Have students participate in the new local school councils so that they can give their views on the way their schools are run to principals and school boards.

In high school, students must develop the knowledge and skills they will need to prepare for adulthood and make important choices about their educational and occupational future. It's time to improve the high school program to better meet the needs of students. Ontario is the only province in Canada where many students take five years to finish high school, and it's time to change that too.



Let's get students ready for life after high school

Will they choose work, training, or higher education? High school students should be able to make informed choices about the future – whether it means doing further studies at a college or university or entering a training

program or getting a job right away.

To make these choices, all students need good advice from guidance counsellors and up-to-date career information.



Here's the government's plan:

- ✓ Provide all guidance counsellors with the training they need to help students and parents. To begin in September 1996.
- ✓ Expand co-op education programs so that more students can participate in them. To begin in September 1995.
- ✓ Include on-the-job training with local employers as part of a new program for senior students. To begin in September 1995.
- ✓ Sponsor projects in the community that link schools to local career-counselling services for youth.
- ✓ Use the Internet and other computer networks to send students, teachers, and parents up-to-date information on which job skills will be most in demand. To begin immediately.

Technology is our highway to the future

Computers are becoming a more important part of our lives. At home, at school, and at work, it is essential to know how to use computer technology. Ontario students – no matter where they live in the province – need computer skills to learn well, expand their horizons, and prepare for the working world. School is the place to start developing these skills. Ontario classrooms need more computers and more teachers who know how to teach technology skills. The province's goal is to have one computer for every ten students by the year 2000.



Here's the government's plan:

- ✓ Raise money from private businesses to match money from the government and school boards.
- ✓ Invest up to \$520 million in technology over the next five years by:
 - providing more computers for classrooms;
 - training teachers in computer skills;
 - developing new and better educational software for students;
- linking classrooms to the information highway so that students, teachers, and administrators can share information with other schools and use educational resources from around the world;
- teaching computer skills in both elementary and high school.
- ✓ At the end of five years, invest \$100 million annually to keep making improvements.

Reduce administration...and spend on the classroom

A school is the centre of your neighbourhood, and your child's classroom is the heart of the school. We should therefore be devoting our attention to the classroom and spending our money there. All children deserve a good education. The more we focus our resources on the classroom, instead of on administration, the better every child's schooling will be.

The Ontario School Board Reduction Task Force

The task force will:

- draw up proposed new school board boundaries;
- hold consultations to discuss new school board boundaries;
- make final recommendations about boundaries by December 31, 1995;
- monitor the merger of school boards.

New school boards will be in place for the 1997 school board elections.



Here's the government's plan:

- ✓ Put more money into classrooms and less money into boardrooms by reducing the number of school boards in Ontario.
- ✓ Create a new body, called the Ontario School Board Reduction Task Force.
- ✓ Limit the amount school boards can spend on administration.
- ✓ Require school boards to share services and personnel, and report their savings to the ministry and public each year.
- ✓ Replace 77 French-language boards and "sections" of boards with a maximum of 15 French-language boards.

School trustees should work part-time

Here's the government's plan:

- ✓ Reduce the number of school trustees. To begin in 1997.
- ✓ Set the top salary for trustees at \$20,000 per year. To begin in 1997.

Elected school trustees have an important role to play in setting policy for their school boards. But this role should not be a full-time job. It is the responsibility of administrative staff to run the day-to-day operation of school boards.



FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Do you have questions about the school system?

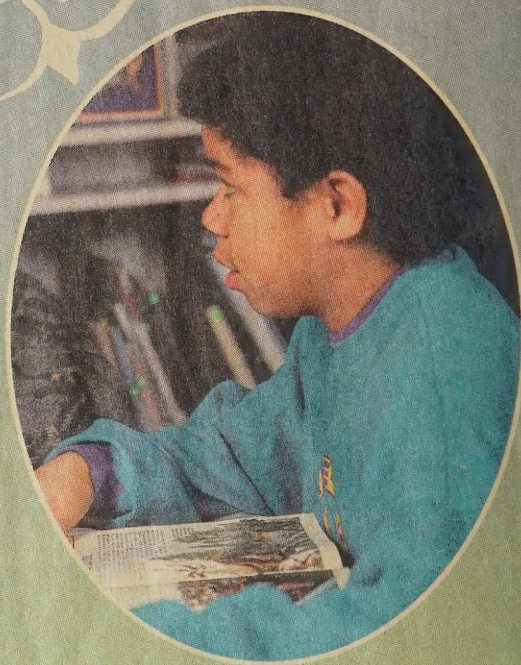
Call 1-800-387-5514 (toll-free in Ontario),
325-2929 (in Toronto)

Do you want to reach the ministry electronically?

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You can retrieve information about education on
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1-800-668-9938 (toll-free in Ontario), 326-5300 (in Toronto)



☒ **Yes, I want to know more about *New Foundations for Ontario Education*.**

Please send me the following free publications.

- ☐ *Report to Parents: A Special Issue on the Common Curriculum* – a plain-language description of the Common Curriculum
- ☐ *New Foundations for Ontario Education: A Summary* – a summary of the reforms being undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Training

☐ English

☐ French

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